

Meadowlark Notes

Issue 70

Fall 2015

Flying On Without Them...

By Dawn Phelps, RN/LMSW

A little over a year ago, one of my younger sisters, Gay Celeste, died at the age of 64 after a battle with cancer. It was hard for us, her siblings, to let her go, but we had no other choice. We do not get to decide when it is time for a loved one to go Home.

When we had our first sibling reunion in Kentucky without her this past

year, she was sorely missed. It was during those days together that one of my sisters, Joan, showed us a vase and told us the story about it.

Joan said that our sister Gay had kept the vase with her in her bedroom. Then shortly before she died, when the reality sunk in that she was not going to live, she told my youngest sister



Mary Anne, her caregiver, about the vase. But first, I must describe the vase.

The vase was about 4-5 inches tall and about 4 inches in diameter.

Director Notes

The holidays are quickly approaching. Soon there will be Thanksgiving turkeys to enjoy and Christmas carols filling the air. Many people feel it is “the most won-

derful time of the year”. To a grieving person, it can be anything but the most wonderful time of the year. Holidays can often be dreadful reminders of the void

that has been left when we lose a loved one. Whether the loss is recent or in years past, the holidays have a notorious way of stirring up the ache in your heart.



MEADOWLARK
HOSPICE

*Our Mission is to
provide loving,
compassionate care
for those living
with a
life-limiting illness.*

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*“Faith is the bird that
feels the light and sings
when the dawn is still
dark.”*

-Rabindranath Tagore

Flying On Without Them..... (cont'd from pg 1)

On the bottom of the vase was the picture of a bird, a crane, in flight. On the side of the vase there were five birds, also matching cranes, flying along together.



My sister Gay told Mary Anne, “The crane on the bottom is Gary.” (Gary is our only brother.) She said that the five birds on the side of the vase were her five sisters who are still alive—Joy, Dawn, Hope, Joan, and Mary Anne.

Then she said, “*You will have to fly on without me,*” profound words that touched our hearts and made us cry. Words that let us know she was thinking about us, even when she was so sick, when she grieving because she must leave us.

So during our few days together in Kentucky, we did carry on with life. We cooked tasty food, played music, told stories, laughed, even danced. But Gay was not forgotten. My oldest sister Joy set a picture of Gay on her coffee table—the photo was made in 1988; Gay was so pretty!

Mary Anne sent a bouquet of flowers which she picked from my sister Gay’s flower garden at the little house she owned when she was alive. My sisters and I wore hand-strung beads that Gay had made for us before she died. The beads were tangible reminders that she had lived and loved us. No, she was not forgotten; we still had our memories.

After the death of someone we love, special times such as family reunions or the holidays may be more difficult than others. That’s when memories of over loved one may flood our thoughts and sadden our hearts, making us long to be with our loved one.

We may not feel like walking, much less like “flying” as my sister said. But it may be helpful to make a conscious effort to try to still find joy in the moment, even if you celebrate in a different way than in previous years. If someone we love has died, we have no other choice than to keep on living and learn to “*fly on without them.*”

*“Even in our unspeakable grief,
beautiful things take wing.”* A.R. Torres



Director Notes..... (cont'd from pg 1)

As I think about the holidays, I often wonder how long the heart will continue to ache? How many holidays are going to feel incomplete because my loved one's laughter will not fill the room? As I work through my personal grief, I look for support and resources to give me the tools I need to handle my heartache. I find peace in remembering what used to make the holidays special and sharing those memories with my children and finding ways to make special holiday memories for them.

To be able to work through your grief, I feel it is important to know what bereavement is and that it is a normal process.

Grieving is a normal process a person goes through as they react to a loss. The period of grief and mourning after a death is called bereavement. The grief may be experienced as reactions that are mental, physical, social, or emotional in nature. Anger, guilt, anxiety, despair, and fear are mental reactions one may exhibit. Changes in appetite, sleep disturbances or illness are physical symptoms one may have related to the grief.

The length of bereavement can depend on if the death of your loved one was expected or anticipated. It can also depend on the relationship you had with the person who died. Another influence might be the amount of time you spent on a daily basis with your loved one. There are many factors that can impact your personal bereavement. Finding support can be very beneficial to helping you work through your grief.

The important thing to remember is that the bereavement period is normal. One can't expect to lose a loved one and not have emotion tied to the loss. Allowing yourself to grieve a loss is a part of the healing process.

Loved ones grieving a loss can turn to Meadowlark Hospice for a variety of options to help them through their bereavement. Again, grieving is a normal process. How a person experiences grief is very individual and one should not compare their reactions to another. Each person needs to grieve in their *own* way to help them through the loss of their loved one. For that reason, we offer different ways to help through grief.

Bereavement groups are available for those that find comfort in support from others. They can offer support and guidance to help make it through the tough days. I've never had the opportunity to attend one of the groups, but I have had many conversations with our bereavement coordinator, Dawn Phelps, about the group she leads. The group is a time to share stories and shed some tears, but it is also time to share joy & hope. As I watch Dawn prepare for the bereavement group each month, I am overwhelmed with appreciation for how she approaches helping people with their grief. From butterflies to apples and bucket lists to Easter egg hunts, Dawn uses creative ways to give a grieving person "tools" to help them heal, no matter where they are at in the grieving process.

Group is not the only bereavement resource available. We offer mailings of a series of bereavement brochures, "Pathways through Grief" (written by Dawn) to grieving family members. Staff is also available to make bereavement visits and phone calls. Dawn is also gracious enough to write a monthly article that is posted on our website. Reaching out to other support systems is also encouraged when one is facing grief. Your church family and friends can be a great source of encouragement and support as you work through the bereavement and whatever reactions you may encounter.

So my hope for you is that if you find that you are still grieving and struggling with your bereavement journey is that you will reach out to find support. Whether your loved one passed last week or ten years ago, you do not have to face the journey alone. Meadowlark Hospice is only a phone call away. Please do not hesitate to call. Our staff is more than willing to help you find the resources that meet your needs.

Amy Burr, RN, BSN
Meadowlark Hospice Director

Calendar of Events

Oct 8	4:30 pm	Clay Center Bereavement Support Group - Meadowlark Hospice office
Oct 8	7:00 pm	The Grief Support Group (community-sponsored) - 214 W 2nd, Washington - Call Terri Clark 785-325-3200
Oct 12	1:00 pm	Concordia Volunteer Continuing Education
Oct 12	3:00 pm	Belleville and Republic Volunteer Continuing Education at Republic
Oct 12	6:30 pm	Concordia Bereavement Group (community-sponsored) - Episcopal Parish Hall, 117 W 8th Call Judy Lambert 785-243-4454
Oct 15	5:30 pm	Belleville Bereavement Support Group – Library, 1327 19 th Street
Oct 19	11:00 am	Clay Center Volunteer Continuing Education
Oct 20	9:30 am	Washington Volunteer Continuing Education
Oct 20	Noon	Marysville Volunteer Continuing Education
Oct 20	2:00 pm	Frankfort Volunteer Continuing Education
Oct 22	4:30 pm	Marysville Bereavement Support Group – South Plaza of CMH – use N door
Nov 9	1:00 pm	Concordia Volunteer Continuing Education
Nov 9	3:00 pm	Belleville and Republic Volunteer Continuing Education at Belleville
Nov 9	6:30 pm	Concordia Bereavement Group (community-sponsored) - Episcopal Parish Hall, 117 W 8th Call Judy Lambert 785-243-4454
Nov 12	4:30 pm	Clay Center Bereavement Support Group - Meadowlark Hospice office
Nov 12	7:00 pm	The Grief Support Group (community-sponsored) - 214 W 2nd, Washington - Call Terri Clark 785-325-3200
Nov 16	11:00 am	Clay Center Volunteer Continuing Education
Nov 17	9:30 am	Washington Volunteer Continuing Education
Nov 17	Noon	Marysville Volunteer Continuing Education
Nov 17	2:00 pm	Frankfort Volunteer Continuing Education
Nov 19	5:30 pm	Belleville Bereavement Support Group – Library, 1327 19 th Street
Nov 26	4:30 pm	Marysville Bereavement Support Group – South Plaza of CMH – use N door
Nov 30	11:00 am	Concordia Tree of Light/Memorial Ceremony - First Christian Church
Nov 30	3:00 pm	Republic County Tree of Light/Memorial Ceremony - Belleville United Methodist Church
Dec 5	11:00 am	Washington Tree of Light/Memorial Ceremony - Washington County Hospital
Dec 5	3:00 pm	Marysville Tree of Light/Memorial Ceremony - Cambridge Place
Dec 6	2:00 pm	Clay Co./Riley Co. Tree of Light/Memorial Ceremony - Clay Center United Methodist Church Family Life Center
Dec 10	4:30 pm	Clay Center Bereavement Support Group - Group will eat together, place TBA
Dec 10	7:00 pm	Frankfort Tree of Light/Memorial Ceremony - Public Library
Dec 10	7:00 pm	The Grief Support Group (community-sponsored) - 214 W 2nd, Washington - Call Terri Clark 785-325-3200
Dec 14	6:30 pm	Concordia Bereavement Group (community-sponsored) - Episcopal Parish Hall, 117 W 8th Call Judy Lambert 785-243-4454
Dec 17	5:30 pm	Belleville Bereavement Support Group - Group will eat together, Place TBA
Date TBA	4:30 pm	Marysville Bereavement Support Group – South Plaza of CMH – use N door

Hospice Gifts & Memorials

Your memorial gifts honor your loved ones and help others!

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Joyce Nelson
Dorothy Richardson
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Your memorial gifts honor your loved ones and help others!

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 Rick & Alice Faye Hanson
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Edwin & Karen Splichal
Darrel & Phebe Stone
Joan Tibbetts-Baker
Kelly Willoughby & Kathryn Vaughan

...JOYCE WILLOUGHBY

J.B. Warren
Margo Willoughby



Be like the bird, who
Pausing in his flight
On limb too slight
Feels it give way beneath him,
Yet sings
Knowing he has wings.

-Victor Hugo



MEADOWLARK HOSPICE

709 LIBERTY
CLAY CENTER, KS 67432

Ph 785.632.2225

Fax 785.632.3557

Email hospice@ccmcks.org

Web meadowlarkhospice.org

*We are available to present
programs to area organizations!*

MEADOWLARK HOSPICE STAFF

Medical Director – John Ryan, MD

Assistant Medical Director – Randall Brown, MD

Nurse Practitioner - Michele Voelker, APRN

Program Director – Amy Burr, RN, BSN

Patient Care Coordinator – Deb Martin, RN, BSN

*Hospice Staff Nurses – Stacy Behrends, RN, BSN; Debrah Bollig, RN;
Sherry Brown, RN; Debra Champlin, RN; Deb Hedke, RN, BSN;
JoAnn Lips, RN; Pam Tremblay, RN; Sherry Wiese, RN;*

Director of Social Services – Dawn Phelps, RN/LMSW

*Social Workers – Stephanie Garrison, LBSW; Jennifer Hiltgen, LBSW;
Joyce Nelson, LMSW; Lucy Papes, LASW*

Bereavement Services Coordinator – Dawn Phelps, RN/LMSW

*Chaplains – Rev. Susan Bantz; Kathy Ouellette; Al Paredes;
Sr. Mary Savoie; Rev. Susan Sawyer; Sr. Marilyn Wall*

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MEADOWLARK HOSPICE

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